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Letter from the Co-Editors

The 2013 Educational Supplement on Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation

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The annual meeting in Salt Lake City marks a return of the Tandem Meetings to an ambience of snow-capped peaks, with the (albeit somewhat distant) prospect of skiing. The retreat of our annual meeting to lower ground in the last few years was a necessity driven by the continuing growth of the meeting, reflecting an increasing number of active stem cell transplantation programs, a growing international membership, and increasing diversity in the specialties and training of participants. Year by year, as new technologies and new insights into transplantation biology move the field relentlessly forward, our meeting documents the improved outcomes of stem cell transplantation. However, for these improvements to translate into optimal transplantation practice, the advances must be disseminated to the professionals delivering clinical care. We consider the annual educational supplement a critical piece of this process.

This year's supplement covers some new biological insights, novel treatments, disease-specific topics, and new understandings of some old intractable problems. Developments in leukemia biology are addressed by Scott Armstrong and colleagues, who discuss the therapeutic targeting of leukemia stem cells. Similarly, developments in the biology of diffuse large B cell lymphoma are discussed by Randy Gascoyne, Craig Moskowitz, and Thomas Shea. Of the new treatments introduced, last year's dramatic demonstration of the antileukemic potency of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-transformed T cell technology is covered in this supplement by contributions from Stanley Riddell, Michael Jensen, and Carl June. Katy Rezvani, Ronald Levy, and John Barrett have assembled a broad review of cancer vaccines and T cell therapy. The state of the art of gene therapy is well summarized by Donald B. Kohn, Sung-Yun Pai, and Michel Sadelain. Novel therapeutic advances for multiple myeloma are also highlighted in an important discussion led by Parameswaran Hari. Alternative donor sources, including cord blood, haploidentical related donors, and unrelated donors, represent a fast-growing field, covered here in a National Marrow Donor Program session (Willis H. Navarro, Galen E. Switzer, Michael Pulsipher) and by Juliet Barker, Helen Heslop, and Marcelo Fernandez Vina. The field of cord blood transplantation continues to advance, not only in terms of the sheer numbers of transplantations performed but also in new ways to overcome the limitation of cell numbers, which is well covered by EJ Shpall, Colleen Delaney, and Catherine Bollard.

The 2013 Tandem Meetings has been intentionally biased toward pediatric topics (in keeping also with the expertise of the co-editors of this supplement!). Our supplement contents reflect this bias, with excellent reviews of pediatric lymphomas (Mitchell S. Cairo, Willi Woessmann, and John Pagel), metabolic disorders (Jaap van Bolens, Paul Orchard, and Gerald Raymond), and nonmalignant disorders (John Tisdale, Mary Eapen, and Ricardo Saccardi). Other topics include transplantation in unique pediatric populations: infants, adolescents, and children with Down syndrome.

The practice of stem cell transplantation still carries the burden of some intractable complications, which continue to limit a successful outcome. No educational supplement would be complete without articles on graft-versus-host disease (GVHD), and this year, improved diagnostic markers for GVHD and new insights into GVHD are described by Pavan Reddy and Amin Alousi. Novel ways to improve immune reconstitution are addressed by Marcel van den Brink, Crystal Mackal, Ann Leen, and colleagues. Furthermore, the problem of posttransplantation complications is highlighted by a group of experts coordinated by Greg Yanik and includes veno-occlusive disease, which is well discussed by a group of experts from the Dana-Farber Cancer Center led by Paul Richardson. Finally, statistical design and analysis is critical for all bone marrow transplantation studies, and novel statistical approaches for these studies are summarized by Brent Logan.

Not all of us ski (Dr. Rocha, among others), and even those who do cannot always claim to have improved much over the years. So it is gratifying that despite such lack of progress on the slopes, our meeting and our educational supplement continue to mark the steady advancement of our field. This does not come without effort, and we would like to thank all of the authors, the associate editors, and Bob Krawisz, who helped us put together what we believe is a comprehensive and exciting summary of the highlights of the past year in transplantation.

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